bilateral and multilateral trade; economic and financial issues and improve business avenues?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Deteriorating Balance of Trade

8. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the situation of India's balance of trade is deteriorating;

(b) if so, what are the details of the balance of trade during the last three years; and

(c) what are the reasons for widening of the gap between exports and imports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The details of the balance of trade during the last three years are as follows:

Year	Value (in US $ billion)
1997-98	-6.48
1998-99	-9.17
1999-2000*	-8.62

* Data for 1999-2000 are provisional and subject to change-

As evident from above data, situation of balance of trade has not deteriorated during 1999-2000. The balance of trade depends on the gap between exports and imports; the imports are essential to meet our requirements of fuel, raw materials and capital goods for export industries.

Alternative Crops for Tobacco

9. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hon'ble Prime Minister during his recent